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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 001886

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SUBJECT: UK'S LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: LOOKING FOR INFLUENCE NOT
POWER, FOR NOW

REF: LONDON 1771

Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

- [1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary. Britain's third party, the Liberal Democrats, launched July 17 their "Make It Happen" campaign to communicate the party's c
[1](#)2. (C/NF) Summary continued. At the same time, Liberal Democrat insiders report the party has been clarifying its thinking on foreign policy.
Clarifying Thinking on Foreign Policy and Security -----
- [1](#)3. (C) The party sees maintaining "credibility on defense and security issues" as crucial for the party's viability, especially because of the
[1](#)4. (C) Acknowledging the Iraq war is no longer a salient issue the Lib Dems can use to rally support against the Labour government, Simpson sa
[1](#)5. (C) Given the current UK economic crunch, the party does not think that foreign policy will feature prominently in the presumed 2010 electi
[1](#)6. (C) Simpson said the tension that exists between the Lib Dems and U.S. foreign policy is somewhat intrinsic to the party's anti-establishme
Making It Happen on Domestic Issues -----
- [1](#)7. (C) In Clegg's July 3 speech to the Local Government Association, he outlined how the Lib Dem's want to decentralize power and taxation to
[1](#)8. (C) Alexander said the Lib Dems are currently reviewing the national budget to find GBP 20 billion (USD 40 billion) in savings, "not throug
[1](#)9. (C) Simpson said the party is also trying to define itself as the pro-family, pro-community party through decentralization, which resonates
[1](#)10. (U) In addition to tax cuts, improved government service delivery, and decentralization, Clegg's July 17 "Make It Happen" campaign also hi
But Why a Third Party? -----
- [1](#)11. (C) Alexander acknowledged the Lib Dems have trouble distinguishing themselves from Labour and the Tories. This has been especially probl
Comment -----
- [1](#)12. (C/NF) Holding only 63 of Parliament's 646 seats leaves the Liberal Democrats struggling for an influential voice in Westminster on both c